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Honduras Said to Seek Larger U.S. Role

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 3 — The chief of the Honduran military is scheduled to visit Washington next week for talks with the Reagan Administration that will include discussions about a larger American military role in his nation, Defense Department officials said today.

The visit will be the second by Gen. Gustavo Alvarez in three weeks. When he was here in May, General Alvarez gave final Honduran approval to a plan for the United States to send more than 100 military advisers to Honduras, tripling the present number, and to open a training camp for Salvadoran soldiers there. The agreement was also approved by the civilian President of Honduras, Roberto Suazo Córdova.

Defense Department officials declined to provide any details about a possible further expansion of United States military cooperation with Honduras but said that military and civilian leaders in Honduras had urged the Reagan Administration to increase military aid to their country.

The White House today vigorously objected to an article in The New York Times reporting that senior Administration officials were considering an increase in United States military involvement in Central America. Larry Speakes, the White House spokesman, denied that any expansion in American activities there was being contemplated.

"The President and his advisers are not considering increasing personnel,

funding or the level of U.S. involvement in Central America," Mr. Speakes said. He added, "The President's statement on U.S. combat involvement stands: We will not Americanize this war."

What the Article Said

The article did not say that the Administration was close to United States combat involvement. It reported that a senior official said the Administration remained committed to keeping American combat forces out of the conflicts in Central America.

Today Mr. Speakes said the article "obviously did not originate at a credible level in the Administration" and contended that it was published "despite the fact that every White House official involved in foreign policy had indicated that it was totally off base."

The article was based on information provided by senior officials in the Defense Department, Central Intelligence Agency and the White House. It said no final decisions had been made about an increased United States military role in Central America, no great increase was expected and no consideration was being given to sending American combat forces.

\$400 Million Reportedly Sought

The article said that Administration officials, concerned that the present commitment of United States resources was inadequate to achieve President Reagan's policy goals, were looking at what could be done, including increasing the number of military advisers in El Salvador, resuming military aid to

Guatemala and expanding the military relationship with Honduras.

The Administration has an agreement with Congress to limit the number of military advisers in El Salvador to 55.

A senior Honduran military official said today that General Alvarez had asked the Reagan Administration for \$400 million in military aid over three years. The Reagan Administration has asked Congress for \$37.3 million in military aid for the fiscal year that ends in September, and has asked for \$41 million for the next fiscal year, according to the State Department.

Honduras has been a key United States ally in Central America. The Honduran military, at the request of the Reagan Administration, has served as a conduit for American money and arms going to rebels in Nicaragua, Administration officials say.

The United States and Honduras have also held several joint military exercises, and Defense Department officials said Honduras had been used as a base for shipping equipment to El Salvador.

The senior Honduran official said General Alvarez told the Reagan Administration emphatically that Honduras would continue to support Nicaraguan insurgents even if the United States cut off aid, as the House intelligence committee voted to do last month.

Meanwhile, the White House announced today that President Alvaro Magaña of El Salvador would visit Washington this month at the invitation of President Reagan.